Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-02-05

Date Prepared: March 28, 2003

Culvert Replacement
Lee Creek Culvert No. 4
Decision Documentation

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the replacement of a large stream-crossing culvert on Lee Creek. The project site is on BLM and private lands in T. 28 S., R. 4 W., Section 15, NE/¼SE¼, W.M., where Lee Creek passes beneath BLM Road No. 28-4-15.1. Field Office hydrology and fishery personnel have identified the culvert as a source of sediment and an impediment to upstream and downstream passage by resident and anadromous fish, and other aquatic organisms. The project is to be accomplished using Title II funds available through the "Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000."

A temporary bypass road will be constructed to provide access to a residential property and private forest lands located above the project site. The bypass road will be removed upon completion of the project.

Culvert design will incorporate the requirements of *the Oregon Road/Stream Crossing Restoration Guide* published by the Oregon Department of Forestry in 1999. Installation will incorporate Best Management Practices from Appendix D (p. 134-136) of the *Roseburg District Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP June, 1995). Among the project design features to be implemented are:

- Pressure washing or steam cleaning of excavation and earth-moving equipment prior to move-in on the project site in order to minimize the risk of introducing soil from outside the project area that may be contaminated with noxious weed seed.
- Restriction of in-stream construction activities to the period between July 1 and September 15, during low summer stream flows.
- Prior to commencement of work, placement of absorbent booms downstream of the project site to contain potential spillage of any petroleum products.
- Diversion of stream flow during construction activities, and minimization of in-stream equipment operation.
- Any resulting waste material will be endhauled to an authorized upland disposal site.

- Replacement of the existing culvert with an open-arched pipe sized to greater than bank-full width and designed to pass a 100-year flood event. The arched pipe will allow accumulation of streambed substrates (spawning gravels) and reduce stream flow velocities that impede upstream and downstream passage by juvenile resident fish, anadromous fish and other aquatic fauna.
- Instream placement of rock weirs to prevent channel incising upstream of the culvert, and provide sufficient grade control downstream of the culvert to facilitate the passage of fish.
- Revegetation of disturbed areas and stream banks with native grasses and/or trees.

Rationale for the Decision:

This project was analyzed under Alternative 1, the proposed action, of the Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration EA. Its implementation will meet the objectives of reducing sediment and restoring fish passage in Lee Creek. Alternative 2, the no action alternative, would not meet the identified objective or need.

The replacement of the culvert will not result in any undue environmental degradation. The project is consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives contained in the ROD/RMP (pp. 20-21). Specifically, the project will aid in the maintenance and restoration of in-stream flows; maintenance and restoration of spatial and temporal connectivity in the watershed; maintenance and restoration of the natural sediment regime; and maintenance and restoration of aquatic habitat. The project is also consistent with the management objective "To preclude stream crossings from being a direct source of sediment to streams thus minimizing water quality degradation and provide unobstructed movement for aquatic fauna." (ROD/RMP, p. 134).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified an array of soil series within a set of geographic quadrangles that represent potentially suitable habitat for Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus var. kincaidii*), listed as a Federally-threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The project area is within the identified geographic range, but the requisite soil types are absent. As a consequence, the site is not considered to be suitable habitat, the species is not expected to be present and surveys are not required.

Surveys for Special Attention species identified in the EA (p. 15) were conducted. The results of those surveys were negative.

The site is not suitable habitat for the northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), nor within ¼-mile of any owl activity center. As a consequence, the project would have no effect on the species with respect to disturbance or the modification of suitable habitat.

Lee Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for the Oregon coast coho salmon, listed as a Federally-threatened species. The effects of culvert replacement are primarily derived from sediment generated by stream bank disturbance and in-stream activities associated with project implementation.

These effects were determined "likely to adversely affect" listed fish and Essential Fish Habitat, consistent with those addressed in the National Marine Fisheries Service *Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion for Programmatic Activities Affecting SONC Coho Salmon, OC Coho Salmon, and OC Steelhead* (USDC 2002). The opinion sets forth Reasonable and Prudent Measures, and Terms and Conditions in conjunction with authorization of Incidental Take. This project incorporates the reasonable and prudent measures, and is consistent with the terms and conditions of the Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion.

No issues were identified by any local or tribal governments, State agencies, or other Federal agencies. The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from February 11, 2003, through March 13, 2003. Comments were received from two organizations. These comments did not constitute new information or identify any issues not already considered and addressed in the Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration EA, the ROD/RMP, or the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*.

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring would be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (p. 84, 190, 193, & 195-199), with emphasis on assessing the effects of the restoration activities on the following resources: Riparian Reserves; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; Fish Habitat; and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat.

Protest and Appeals Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication the Decision Notice in *The News-Review,* Roseburg, Oregon.

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E. Dwight Fielder Date
Field Manager
South River Field Office